THE LORD GEORGE DIGBIES APOLOGIE FOR HIMSELFE,

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The Lord *George Digbies* Apologie for himſelfe, publiſhed the fourth of *Ianuary*, *Anno Dom.* 1642,

IT may be wondred at, that, after well nigh a yeares groaning under the moſt inſupportable burthen of publick diſpleaſure, and cenſure I ſhould now conſider my ſelfe ſo much, as, in a generall calamity, to make an Apologie to the world; or ſhould hope, that at a time when ſo great clouds of jealouſie, and diſeſteeme hang over perſons of the moſt cleare, and unblemiſhed reputations, any thing I can ſay may reconcile me to thoſe affections, which have been tranſported with ſo much violence to my prejudice. But whoſoever knoweth me well, and the great trouble of mind I indured when I found my ſelfe (by what demerit, God is my judge, I cannot gueſſe) fallen from that proportion of eſteeme with my Countrey (of which I was prouder then I can be of any worldly preferment) into ſo eminent a degree of diſfavour with the repreſentative body thereof (upon whoſe wiſedome and Authority no man hath looked with more reverence, and veneration) that I was marked out as an enemy to the Cõmonwealth, I am ſure cannot but expect from me ſome diſcovery of that ſence, and that I ſhould, at leaſt endeavour to diſtinguiſh my misfortunes from my faults, whereby ſuch, who are not engaged in a peremptory uncharitableneſſe, may find cauſe to change the Opinion they have taken upon truſt of me.

Nor am I out of hope, that the experience men have ſince had of the times inclination to calumnie, by the

declining of so many persons of Honour, and integrity in the popular estimation, may at the last, open a way to so much justice and ingenuity on my behalfe, that all men may discern in their owne right, that if they shall so credulously consent, upon generall discourses, to sacrifice a third mans honour, and reputation, they shall open a doore to let in ruine to themselves, and may quickly loose the advantage of their own innocence.

I shall begin my unfortunate story from the beginning of this Parliament; reflecting no further backe upon the precedent, then in a remembrance of the great comfort I then receiv'd in my Countries acceptation of my first attempts in its service, at a time, as some were pleased to expresse it, when the Court was at the highest, whether to worke upon mens, ambitions, or feares. Before that time I am sure I was as unacquainted with Action, as with Envie, having kept more company with books, then with men; and being so well content with that society, that I had as little ambition, as merit to improve my condition. To this Parliament I was sent on the behalfe of the Countrey wherein I lived, and truly, if I brought any passion or affection thither with me, it was my former warmth improved against those pressures, and the persons who begot those pressures, which were grievous to the people: and against these I will without vanity say, that I brought as great a resolution to discharge my conscience, and my duty, as any man in that Assembly, and had the happinesse for some moneths, to receive that testimony. My conversation was, and I made or endeavoured to make my friendships, with those, whose experience, and abilities, were most eminent for the publick service, and to the reputation, and authority of these men, I confesse, for a while, I gave

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my ſelfe up with as much ſubmiſsion, as a man could, without reſigning the uſe of his own underſtanding. In any thing that was neceſſary, or but probably pretended to be neceſſary for the Common-wealth, we never differed in the leaſt degree; but in improvements, in reall alterations, which were to be govern'd by prudentiall motives, we were not alwayes of one minde. And whoſoever remembreth the paſſages of that time, muſt call to mind, that the firſt declination I ſuffer'd from the intereſt I ſeem'd to have, was in the buſineſſe of the Church: in which, having had frequent conſultations with the chiefeſt agents for a reformation, and finding no three men to agree upon what they would have in the place of that they all reſolv'd to remove, I agreed not with the prevailing ſenſe, having not hardineſſe enough to incline to a mutation, which would evidently have ſo great an influence upon the peace, proſperity, and intereſt of the whole Kingdome. And thus, from the firſt debate of Epiſcopacy, upon the *London* Petition, all men obſerv'd the date of my unmerited favour began to expire. Then came on the tryal of the Earle of *Strafford*, in the which I muſt ſay, I failed not of my duty in proving the charge and evidence, before thoſe who were to judge of both. In the diſcharging of that duty, it was my fortune, by the unluckie acception of ſome expreſſions of mine, to draw upon me a ſharpe malignity from ſome perſons of much intereſt in the Houſe, which never failed to manifeſt it ſelfe, after that accident, upon every the leaſt occaſion.

About this time, I was told by a Friend, that I loſt much of my credit by being obſerv'd to be ſo much at Court; I replyed, that I had not then the ſame juſtice with other men, who were there more then I, though

they avowed it lesse, that it was a principall joy to me, to see those persons, who had beene the prime Actours in the happy Reformation of this Parliament, so acceptable at Court, and likely to have so great a share in the chief places there, and the conduct of affairs for the future. That since it had pleased His Majesty to give so plenary a Redresse to all the grievances of His Subjects, and to secure them for ever from the like invasions, by such a wall of brasse as the Triennial Bill, I conceived that thence forward, there was no more to be thought on, but how in a gratefull returne to His Majesty, to advance His Honour, and Plenty, according as before such happy settlements. I had often heard those principall intendents of the publike good most solemnly professe, and consequently, that the Court, and Countrey were, in truth, now to be all of a piece, and there would hereafter be no more cause of jealousie between them: Lastly, that, howsoever, I thought my self as likely to do good there, as to receive hurt.

The first evidence I had of the disfavour of the House of Commons, (where I had served with all faithfulnes, diligence, and humility,) was upon the printing of my Speech to the Bill of Attainder of the Earl of *Strafford*. As for the Good-Fridayes exercise which the delivery of it in the House procur'd mee, I reputed that a most comfortable and eminent testimony of the continuance still of much justice and favour towards mee in that Honourable House; since, after a dozen distinct charges upon the severall passages of that Speech, urged against me with great strictnesse and acrimony, by that number of the most eminent persons there, both in abilities and interests, and at a time when certainly most men of my opinion were at their Devotions, they were not able af-

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ter foure houres debate to expoſe mee, either upon the mayn matter, or upon the bye, unto the leaſt reprehenſion.

For the thing it ſelfe, I will ſay no more of it, but that it hapned to be upon a very unpopular argument; but the cauſe and circumſtance of the printing it, was this:

I did not find onely that it was unfaithfully reported, and uncharitably interpreted, but was inform'd, that Copies went abroad of it ſo falſly, and malitiouſly collected, as made the whole Speech a juſtification of my Lord of *Staffords* innocence; and Sir *Lewis Dives* having heard of ſuch a Copy in the houſe of a Citizen of good quality, where hee heard mee mentioned as a perſon fit to have his name fixt upon poſts, that I might be torn in pieces by the people, upon that Reaſon earneſtly deſired mee to give him a true Copy of what I had ſaid in that Argument, which I did, and hee forthwith gave direction for the Printing it, without any privity of mine. Yet, if I had conſented to it, and directed it, I profeſſe, I ſhould little have imagin'd, that (at a time when there was ſuch an univerſall licence taken to Print every thing, of how great irreverence ſoever,) either to Church or State, with impunity, a Speech made in the Houſe of Commons, a Speech ſo narrowly, and ſeverely ſifted, and examined there, and yet let paſſe without the leaſt cenſure, either on the Speech it ſelf, or the Author; that the Printing of ſuch a Speech ſhould riſe to ſo high a nature, as to make me for ever uncapable of any Honour or Employment in the Commonwealth, I profeſſe could hardly have falne within my Reaſon or feares to ſuſpect. And yet 3 months after the

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fact committed, after the Printing of an 100 Speeches more by other men, after my having several times sorde and pressed for a hearing, whilest I was of the House of Commons, after by His Majesties favour I had late six or seven weeks a Member of the House of Peers, after all this, no lesse a judgment (as far as the Vote of the House of Commons could contribute to it) passed upon me unheard, over, and above the shame of having the Speech it self burned by the hand of the Hangman. How I bore this affliction, with what anxiety of minde to my selfe, with what temper and submission to that Honourable Assembly, from whence the blow came, as many of my neer friends can testifie the first; so the envy, or malice of no man, can reasonably and justly taxe me, as unto the other. How other young men upon no greater a stock of innocence then mine, might have suffered themselves to be transported upon such misfortunes, (not to give them any other term) I leave to those to judge, who have not been so long brought up in the Schole of affliction.

As this censure fell upon me for many Moneths after the fault objected; so it rested within those wals where it begun without ever desiring a concurrence from that Court, where I was onely to be judged, and where I could onely answer for my self, and hope for a vindication; which increased my sufferings to an unspeakble height, that I could by no meanes cleere my selfe in the place where I received the wound, nor could take notice of it, where I might be cleered by my Peeres, for seare of breach of privilledge of Parliament; Though my censure were knowne to all the Kingdome, yea, I may say my infamy in print with forreigne Nations.

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Under this weight (enough to have broken a body, and a mind better prepared for these exercises then mine) I suffered till the rudenesse and violence of that Rabble, drave both their Majesties, for the safety of themselves and their children, to *Hampton* Court, whither by command I attended them. In this short journey many Souldiers, and Commanders (who had assembled themselves, joyntly to solicite the payment of their arreares for the late Northerne expedition, from the two Houses of Parliament) waited on their Majesties, and leaving them at *Hampton* Court, provided their owne accommodations at *Kingston*, the next place of receipt, and still so used for the over-plus of company, which the Court it selfe could not entertaine. To these Gentlemen, of whom few or none were of my acquaintance, and to this place was I sent by his Majesty, with some expressions of his Majesties good acceptance of their service, and returning the same night to *Hampton* Court, continued my attendance to *Windsor*, whither their Majesties then repaired. I had not been there one day, when I heard that both Houses of Parliament were informed, that I, and Colonel *Lunsford*, a person with whom I never exchanged twenty words in my life, had appeared in a warlike manner at *Kingston*, to the terrour of the Kings liege people; and thereupon had ordered, that the Sheriffe of Surrey, and as I conceive, that all other Sheriffs throughout *England* should raise the power of their severall Counties, to suppresse the forces that he and I had levyed.

When first this newes was brought me, I could not but slight it; as a ridiculous rumour; for being most certain, that I had never been at *Kingston* but onely upon that message of the Kings to forty or fifty Gentlemen, totally strangers to me, with whom I stayed not the space of halfe an houre, at most, and in no other equipage, then a Coach and six hired horses, with one single man in the Coach with me, and one servant riding by: I thought it utterly impossible for the most Romancy it selfe, at so neer a distance, to raise out of that any serious matter of scandall, or prejudice upon me. But when soon after, I received from some of my friends, not only

a confirmation of that seeming impossibility, but a particular accompt of the manner of it: How some information concerning me at *Kingston* had been referred to the examination of a Committee of my sharpest enemies; how the six Coach-horses I appeared with there, were turned by them into six score horses, and that mistake, I know not by what prevalence of my unhappinesse, or of my enemies credit, not suffered to be rectified by other witnesses there, who affirmed the truth: Finding my selfe in this sad condition, but twenty miles off, and not knowing how the people in other places might be certified, if reports concerning me should spread, but in a proportionable rate, to remoter distances, they being now derivable from such considerable Authors, I must confesse I then began to look upon my selfe as a person of that rare misfortune, that my reputation would not weigh down the most improbable, or impossible accusation, but fit to receive any imputation of guilt, the most mischievous or malitious instrument of calumny could invent. And in this condition, with no other discontent, then not believing my selfe much indebted to the world for good usage, I procured his Majesties licence, to transport a person of so great inconvenience and danger, out of his Dominions into another Country; and with all possible speed removed my selfe into *Holland*, never suspecting that my guilt would increase with my absence, in the retired private life which I had resolved on, and did according to that resolution, lead beyond sea, having the vanity of some hope, that a little time discovering the falsehood of some things beleeved of me, would take away the inconvenience of other things that were but unworthily suspected. Some weeks I rested there without any new hurt, till the falsehood of a person, to whose truth I committed a Packet, brought it to a hand well contented with any occasion to satisfie his own particular private malice, and revenge upon me; and so my Letters, one to the Queens Majestie, and the other to my Brother, Sir *Lewis Dives*, were publikely brought to be read in both Houses of Parliament; from thence new arguments of guilt are so farre inforced against me, and the

former displeasure revived and heightned to such a pitch, that at the same time I heard of the interception of my Letters, I found my selfe accused of High Treason too, and that for levying warre against the King, a crime certainly that of all other, I could least suspect my selfe guilty of. And to say the truth, it came into my charge but by accident, for being in generall charged of High Treason, and the impeachment in particular, bearing onely that I had appeared in warlike manner to the terrour of the Kings Subjects, a question was raised by a Lord or two, learned in the law, whether that accusation would amount to treason, or no, and so leave was desired to amend the charge, which being granted to make sure work, by the Statute of 25 *Ed.* 3. it was put in, that I had leavied war against the King. If I were guilty, or suspected of so lowd a crime, how it came to sleep so long, or if not, how these Letters (wherein upon an unpartiall survey there will not be found so much as an opinion as unto peace or war) could minister occasion for a charge of my levying war against the King, I leave to equall consideration. I am far from censuring or disputing the resolution, or opinion of both, or either House of Parliament; no man receives a stroke from thence with more submission and humility, and the great reverence I beare to it hath made such an impression in me, that the weight of their displeasure hath added many yeares to me, but in so neer a concernment of my life, and my honour, that grave assembly may give me leave, without presuming to think their judgements unjust, to say, their evidence may be untrue, and the persons trusted by them, not so full of honour, ingenuity, or integrity, so free from passion, malice, interest, or affection, as they are thought. It will be no presumption, or disrespect to that great Counsell to say, that I have many enemies, who who have used all the ill arts, their wit or malice could suggest, to bring this affliction upon me, and have not in whispers, or in the dark published their resolution to destroy me: witnesse the known tampering with very many persons, both by threats, and promises, to accuse me; their creating and cherishing such monstrous untruths

truths of my treating with the Danes, and other forreigne powers of a great treason of mine plotted, and discovered at *Sherburne*, with mighty warlike preparations there: of my being at the head of the Rebels in Ireland, and the like; to make me odious to the people, to whose rage and violence they have often endeavoured to give me up a sacrifice; the deep sense I have of my afflictions, and injuries, shall never transport me to heighten the representation of them to the least degree beyond truth; but whoever shall consider the penalty of Treason, the ruine and desolation it brings to families, the brand and infamie it fixes on our memories, and shall remember that this portion was designed to me, for going on my masters errant, in a Coach and sixe horses, will beleeve that a mixture of sorrow and innocence, with so much passion as may keepe them company, may well be allowed to breath it selfe with so much freedome, as to present to the world with a true and sensible life my sufferings, upon whomsoever the injustice and inhumanitie may light, of having oppresst and bow'd downe to the earth, a young man and all his hopes, by such undeserved calamities.

Since that time, other letters of mine or copies of letters (possibly never sent) have had the same fortune, and been published to the world, to shew the follies and indiscretions of a man, enough in her disfavour before, with Glosses and Comments to informe the people how much of the dangerous and pernicious Counsells, pretended to be then, and still on foot, had passed through my hands, and how great an enemy I am to Parliaments, to this later most grievous and venemous imputation, I hope God will have preserved me some kind of Antidote in mens memories, of what part I had the happinesse to beare in the passing of the Triennall Bill, and to it I shall only say thus much, that I have had the honour to be a member of the one House, and must presume to thinke my self still a member of the other, that I value the honour, the dignity and the priviledges of both, infinitely above the pleasures and benefits of life, and if I ever wilfully contributed, or shall ever consent to

the prejudice of either, I wish the desires of all my enemies may fal upon me.

To that of my having had so great a hand in ill Counsels, while h are expressed to be of His Majesties removing from London to a place of safety, and the like, I shall be bold to say, that the Letter to the Queenes Majesty, from whence my enemies would make the inference, hath not with any considerer the least propending of advice any way, but is meerly an accompt of mine own intentions to apply my selfe to His Majesties service, either by absence, or attendance, according to course, that His Majestie in His wisdome should think fit to take. Every body knows I never had the honour to be a Councellour, neither have I presumed, without being questioned by His Majesty, to interpose in His affaires: when he hath graced me with any question, I have answered with the freedom of a Subject, and a Gentleman. But had I bin a Counsellor, having seen what I have seene, and heard what I heard, I, who have knowne such members of both Houses, marked out by the multitude for blessings, and such for sacrifice: I who can say with truth, that such of that rabble, cryed out, the King's the Traitour; such, that the young Prince would governe better; I who can prove that a Leader of those people in the heate and violence of the tumult, cryed out, that the King was not fit to live; Had I beene a Counsellour, what had I beene (as the learning of Treason was then understood) should I not have advised his Majesty to withdraw to a place of safety, not from His Parliament, but from that insolent and unruly multitude, who had already brought into so much hazard the persons and the liberty of this till then most happy Parliament, and not staying there, did so dowdly threaten mine, even to the sacred Person of the King; Advertise his Majestie I did of the danger; advise him I could not, I had neither the abilitie, nor the authoritie.

In my letter to the Queene, at her first comming into *Holland*, it was observed, that in that expression, [of welcoming her from a Country not worthy of her] I shewed much venime and rancour to my own Nation. I meant it not, and must appeale to those who are best acquainted with the Civility of language, whether the ad-

dresse might not be comely to any Lady of quality, who should upon any not pleasing occasion, leave one Country for a while to reside in another. And I hope e're long to welcome her majestie back from a place not so unworthy of her, unto this Nation most worthy of her, without either disparagement to *Holland*, or complement to those to whō the unworthy of that letter was intended.

For the charge of boldnesse, and presumption in some expressions of those letters (though I might be glad to compound my treason for incivilitie) since the suspicion of that depends upon the right understanding of language, and connexion of words; it will be no disrespect to any, through whose hands they have passed, to beleeve, that as they were otherwise intended by me, so that they are capable of other interpretation. However, if in truth, misunderstanding, or ill breeding hath produced the other, I hope the conclusion will only be, that I am an ill Courtier, or an ill Secretary, both which I do humbly confesse, not that I am no good English man, no good subject. If in any of those letters there were any expressions of discontent or bitternesse, I shall say little more, then that they passed an examination they were not prepared for, & fell into hands that they were not directed to: and I am confident that many honest Gentlemen, who have had the happinesse to preserve their papers from such an inquisition, and shall consider the case they might be in, if all their secret conferences, and private letters were exposed and produced to the publick view, will cast up these letters of mine, in the number of my misfortunes, without making any addition to my faults: and certainly, whoever shall observe the measure of my sufferings, with any kind of indifference, will easily forgive such eruptions of passion, as were only vented by me to a brother, though they came within the reach of any other eare.

To draw now to a Period of my unfortunate story, which I cannot promise my selfe, from the generality, so much charity as to vouchsafe the reading, further then meere curiosity shall lead them; I returned into England not with so much joy to see my Country, as hope to be admitted upon my humble Petition to His majestie, to

a faire, regular, impartiall vindication of my innocencie, and I protest to God, I look upon the time I may naturallie hope to live with no other comfort, then as it may make me still capable of that happinesse. I have follies and infirmities enough about me to make me aske the pardon of every wise and good man, but for treason (or for any voluntary crime either against my Soveraign, or my country) I say it with all humility, I will not accept a pardon from the King and Parliament. By the grace of God it shall never be said, that either the Parliament hath brought me, or His majestie exposed me to a triall, my own uprightnesse shall constantly (unelected) and without recourse in this to either of their favours) I will either stand a justified man to the world, or fall an innocent. But in the meane time, till it please God to bless this nation with such a composure of the present distractions, as that Government and Law may have their rightfull and comfortable course, I implore only so much charity from men, as may seem due to one, whose good intentions to his country have bin in some sort publiquely manifested, whose ill are yet but obscurely and improbably suggested.

To conclude, let the few [illegible] I have liv'd be examined, and if there be found any rancour or venime in my nature, even toward particular persons which might in time contract it selfe to an enmity against the state, if I have bin a fomenter of jealousies & debate, or a secret conspirer against the honour and fame of any man, If I have worne Religion as a maske and vizard for my hypocrisie, and underhand cherished any opinions that I have not avowed, if I have bin lead by any hopes of preferment to flattery, or by the misse of it, to revenge, if I have been transported with private ambition and been inclined to sacrifice the least branch of the publique peace & happinesse to my owne ends and advantage, let the complication of all these ills prepare a judgement of treason it selfe upon me, and let me bee looked upon as a man who hath made a progresse in wickednesse, that a few yeares more added to that account, would render me a prodigie to the world. But if in truth my life hath been pleasant to me under no other nation, then as I might make it use-

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full to my Country, and have made it my businesse to beget and continue a good intelligence amongst good men. If I have bin then most zealous and fervent for the liberties of the Subiect, when the power of Court was most prevalent, and for the rights of the Crowne, when popular licence was most predominant; if by my Continuall study and practice of Religion, I have alwayes bin a true sonne of the Church of England, and by my submission and application of my actious to the knowne rule of the Law, I have alwaies bin a true son of the state of England; if my actions have bin honest, and my words onely doubtfull; if my life onely clouded with many imperfections, I hope the world will believe, I have been overtaken with too great a measure of unhappinesse, and every generous heart will ease me of some part of my burthen, by giving the benefit of his good opinion.

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